LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-24. (canceled)

25. (currently amended) A method of retrieving a record from a compressed database, ~~the database having been compressed by storing information regarding distinct values of an attribute and information regarding the number of occurrences of distinct values; the method comprising the steps of~~:

a. retrieving information regarding the number of occurrences of a given value <u>from the database, the database having been compressed by storing information regarding distinct values of an attribute and information regarding the number of occurrences of distinct values</u>;

b. determining an instance element based on information regarding the number of occurrences of the given value;

c. determining a connectivity element based on the instance element; and

d. determining a record from the connectivity element.

26. (previously presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the step of retrieving the information regarding the number of occurrences of the given value comprises analyzing a cardinality store.

27. (previously presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the step of determining an instance element information regarding the number of occurrences of the given value comprises analyzing an instance store.

28. (previously presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the step of determining the connectivity element comprises analyzing a connectivity store.

29. (previously presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the step of determining a record comprises analyzing a value store.

30. (previously presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the retrieving of the record is caused by an Structured Query Language (SQL) query.

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 30, wherein the SQL query is a SELECT query.